

BRIEFINGS ON TRANS HEALTHCARE

TRANS POSITIVITY

2024



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Understanding the intricacies of wellbeing and mental health for trans people is important; it is necessary to identify and understand any difficulties they might face so that services and policy can be designed to deliver improvements. However, this means that research can sometimes paint a negative picture of what it means to be trans. Increasingly, researchers are taking strengths-based approaches to their work, such as identifying positive aspects of, and influences in, trans people's wellbeing.¹⁻⁷

In particular, there is a small but growing body of research on gender euphoria.⁸⁻¹³ Gender euphoria is the opposite of gender dysphoria—it is a positive experience of comfort, confidence and joy, related to feeling “right” in one's gender, and feeling affirmed by one's experiences related to gender. Gender euphoria rose in contrast to medical understandings of gender dysphoria, and is interrelated—it is a way to explain and understand the positive aspects of trans identities and outcomes associated with gender-affirmation.¹⁰⁻¹² International research shows that gender euphoric experiences can be external, internal, and/or social, and that they can result in an enhanced quality of life.^{10,11}

Australian research on gender euphoria shows that gender euphoria is a central concept underlying trans people's conceptualisations of wellbeing.¹³ Furthermore, people who feel a sense of belonging to the LGBTIQ+ community and have easily been able to access gender-affirming healthcare are more likely to experience gender euphoria.⁸ Gender euphoria is associated with lower levels of psychological distress and suicidal ideation.⁸ Research with trans young people and their families demonstrates how gender euphoria can arise from self-understanding, receiving affirming healthcare, healthy relationships, and positive interactions with people in the broader community.¹⁴

Broader Australian research on the positive aspects of trans people's lives finds that young people report connection and companionship with other trans people, dismissing rigid gender role expectations, camaraderie and commiseration with other marginalised groups and gender euphoria as being key positive aspects in young trans lives.¹⁵ Other

research shows that medical and legal gender affirmation result in increased mental wellbeing.^{16,17} Allowing young people to express themselves and affirming their gender in all areas of life, go a long way in supporting the wellbeing of trans young people. Listening to their experiences and allowing their voices to be heard lets us also understand the positive and joyful aspects of being trans.

Intended use of information

While we make every effort to make sure the information in this resource is accurate and informative, the information does not take the place of professional medical advice.

Do not use our information as a substitute for the advice of a health professional.

If you are an individual seeking medical or health information for yourself or for someone else, you should obtain advice relevant to your particular circumstances from a health professional.

More information and support

For clinicians, please contact AusPATH for resources and support. www.auspath.org.au

For families and young people, please contact Transcend Australia for resources and support. www.transcend.org.au

This resource and associated evidence briefs and fact sheets can be downloaded from www.transcend.org.au/resources/evidence

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